Culture Decoded

How Hispanic GenZ Redefines Authentic Brand Engagement

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Executive Summary

Hispanic Gen Z consumers are reshaping the way brands connect with culture and audiences.

LatiNation's research study, the LatiNation Media Study, confirms that long-standing assumptions in Hispanic mar-keting no longer apply to bilingual and English-dominant audiences ages 18-34. This group holds substantial economic power and evaluates brand messaging with a sharper, more critical eye.

The study, which surveyed 400 Hispanic participants across the U.S., fills a major intelligence gap about a population that balances multiple cultural iden-tities while living primarily in English. Previous generations relied heavily on Spanish-language media. Today, Hispanic Gen Z moves fluidly be-tween cultures, creating a reality that renders conventional multicultural marketing approaches ineffective.

67 Million
Hispanic Americans in the U.S.

$2.8 Trillion
In annual Hispanic buying power

Gen Z (18-24)
Fastest-growing Segment of U.S. Hispanics

What The Data Reveals

1. Cultural Authenticity Drives Measurable Business Results

87% of Hispanic Gen Z consumers can immediately detect inauthentic advertising. Yet, 59% reward brands that ac-knowledge their heritage with loyalty and engagement. Only 29% place importance on Spanish-language ads, while 67% expect authentic cultural reflection of who they are. When brands get this right, the payoff is real: 51% of engaged viewers visit a brand's site and 42% go on to make purchases after seeing culturally authentic campaigns.

2. Language Preferences Show Sophisticated Cultural Navigation

Cultural identity remains paramount for GenZ, with 91% considering heritage important. However, their relationship with language proves more nuanced than simple translation. While 64% view Spanglish usage favorably, only 29% prioritize language as the primary connection point in advertising. Instead, 50% value authentic cultural representation that conveys shared values, lived experiences, and cultural cues beyond language, mirroring their bicultural lives.

3. Content Consumption Patterns Show Identity Exploration

85% of Hispanic Gen Z use content to connect with their Hispanic/Latino identity, with over one-third actively using media to learn about their heritage. Content serves as a cultural bridge, helping younger audiences maintain heritage connections while living in contemporary American culture. This positions media as an active tool for identity formation rather than passive entertainment.

4. Universal Entertainment Creates Stronger Connections Than Cultural Specificity

Comedy (77% enjoyment) and music (70% enjoyment) con-tent generates stronger engagement than Latino-specific programming (telenovelas, Spanish-language variety shows, heritage-focused documentaries). Reality shows (63%) and authentic, unfiltered programming (63%) perform strongly, suggesting that emotional connection and relatability matter more than cultural category placement. The best strategy blends mainstream entertainment with authentic cultural details instead of creating siloed "Hispanic content."

Why This Matters to Advertisers

This research offers a clear roadmap for reaching 14.7 million Gen Z Hispanics, a segment within the 67 million Hispanic Americans whose buying power is forecast to reach $2.8 trillion by 2026. Based on their share of the population, Gen Z Hispanics represent an estimated $616 billion of that total. As the fastest-growing and most culturally influential segment, Gen Z evaluates brand authenticity with sophistication unmatched by older cohorts.

/ Cultural identity still matters deeply
(91% consider heritage important), but success requires moving beyond "translate and deploy" strategies toward genuine cultural competency.

/ Content preferences favor emotional authenticity over demographic targeting.
Broad appeal with genuine cultural integration reaches Hispanic Gen Z without losing mainstream audiences.

/ Authenticity converts.
Strong conversion metrics prove the ROI: 51% of viewers visit websites and 42% purchase after engaging with authentic ads.

51%
of viewers visit websites

42%
make purchases through ads

LatiNation stands at the intersection of bicultural authenticity and English-first storytelling. The LatiNation Media Study validates this positioning and highlights the opportunities for brands to build real connections with an influential audience. The following sections outline the background, key findings, and strategic implications of the study.

Background & Methodology

The Growing Hispanic Market Opportunity

Sometimes, a single word like "mijo" can make the difference between an ad that feels authentic and one that misses the mark. For Hispanic Gen Z, small cultural signals carry weight because they reflect lived experience. Understanding those signals (and the broader context of bicultural identity), is essential for any brand that wants to connect with this audience.

Hispanic Americans represent 67 million people with buying power projected to reach $2.8 trillion by 2026. Within this influential market, Gen Z Hispanics (about 14.7 million individuals, or 22% of the U.S Hispanic population), are leading dramatic changes in how media is consumed and how brands are judged, changes that upend traditional multicultural marketing assumptions.

Unlike previous generations who primarily consumed Spanish-language media, today's Hispanic Gen Z consumers are predominantly bilingual or English-dominant. They balance multiple cultural identities with ease, staying deeply connected to their heritage while fully engaging in broader American culture.

The current media environment makes this duality even more pronounced. While legacy Hispanic networks continue to prioritize Spanish-only programming, a fast-growing segment seeks content that mirrors their bicultural lives: English-first programming layered with authentic cultural representation.

Why LatiNation Commissioned This Study

LatiNation identified a major blind spot in market understanding: **the behaviors and attitudes of English-dominant Hispanic audiences and their changing relationship with media and brands.** As streaming options multiplied and consumption patterns shifted, advertisers and media planners lacked data-driven insights into how this generation interacts with content and brands.

This study addresses that gap. It reinforces LatiNation's focus on bicultural, English-first Hispanic viewers and their demand for authentic cultural representation. It also highlights underserved communities within this audience (including LGBTQ+ Latinas and Afro-Latinos), that remain largely overlooked by mainstream Hispanic media.

> "Gen Z Hispanic is a generation that's experiencing a new form of identity-based curiosity that comes from how they consume information. **It's less about not knowing who they are and more about them being very aware that there's so much to discover** about their own identity. It's a continuous cycle of rediscovering their place in society."
>
> **ANDRES PALENCIA**
> CEO, LatiNation

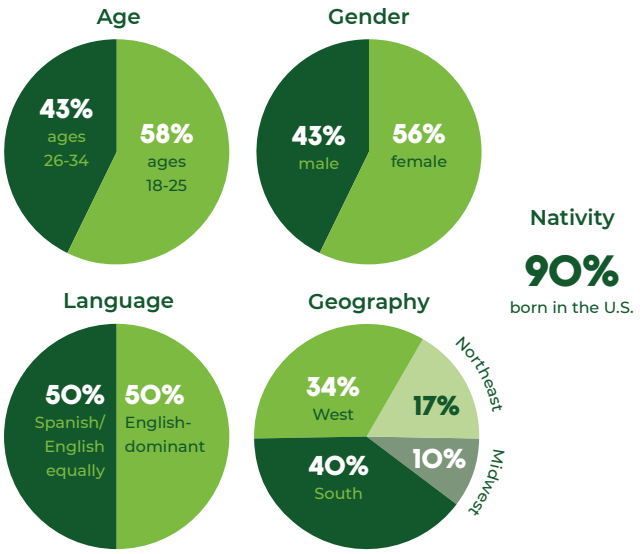
Study Methodology

LatiNation commissioned ThinkNow, a leading multicultural research firm, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Hispanic Gen Z media habits and cultural attitudes. Agency partners also contributed input to ensure the findings tied directly to real-world media planning needs. The following graphic breaks down the research specifications and sample demographics.

Research Specifications

Method: Online survey, national coverage
Sample: 400 respondents
Target: Hispanic, ages 18-34, bilingual or English-dominant
Timing: May-June 2025
Language: English

Sample Demographics



Research Focus Areas

Media behaviors, content preferences, cultural identity, language usage, advertising engagement, and brand authenticity evaluation.

The following sections present key findings that challenge conventional Hispanic marketing assumptions and show actionable opportunities for brands seeking authentic cultural engagement with this influential audience segment.

Key Findings

The LatiNation research study highlights six key insights that redefine how brands and media planners should engage Hispanic Gen Z. Together, they reveal a generation that values flexibility, cultural authenticity, and emotional connection. Lastly, they demonstrate the business results that follow when brands get it right.

1. Media Behaviors

Multi-Platform Streaming Navigation Reflects Cultural Fluidity

Hispanic Gen Z audiences have adopted a flexible approach to media consumption that prioritizes content access over platform loyalty, moving smoothly between devices and formats based on context and content needs.

Mixed-platform consumption dominates the Hispanic Gen Z media environment. Instead of committing to single streaming platforms or content sources, 61% of consumers blend free and paid streaming platforms, with premium subscriptions acting as anchors and free options providing variety and discovery.

61%
mix free and paid streaming services

51%
of 26–34-year-olds primarily watch on Smart TVs

This flexibility shows clear demographic differences. Younger audiences (ages 18-25) are more experimental, with 30% exploring free platforms compared to just 22% of those 26-34. Meanwhile, women demonstrate stronger loyalty to premium platforms, with 41% preferring paid subscriptions versus 31% of men.

Device use also splits sharply by generation. Mobile phones (75%) and Smart TVs (74%) are the most used overall, but primary viewing devices differ: Smart TVs dominate at 44% usage overall, rising to 51% among 26-34 year olds compared to 38% of 18-25 year olds. Younger viewers, meanwhile, are more mobile-first, with 35% naming phones as their primary device versus 24% for older Gen Z.

This device fragmentation presents both opportunities and challenges for content creators and advertisers, who must optimize experiences across very different screen sizes and viewing contexts.

> "You have **a highly engaged audience seeking authentic content that not too many content providers are serving.** This shows young, highly engaged, culturally fluid Hispanic audience using content to define identity and stay connected to culture."
>
> **MARIO CARRASCO**
> Co-Founder & Principal, ThinkNow Research

2. Cultural Identity

Heritage Pride Drives Content Preferences

Cultural identity remains central to Hispanic Gen Z audiences, but their relationship with heritage content is more nuanced than simple language preferences. Authentic cultural representation is what drives real connection.

91%
say heritage is important to identity

35%
use content to learn about their heritage

Cultural pride is nearly universal for Hispanic Gen Z. An over-whelming 91% of respondents say their cultural or ethnic heritage is an important part of who they are, and 95% express interest in learning about foreign cultures. This dual perspective creates a unique opportunity for brands to position themselves as both culturally authentic and globally inclusive.

Language plays a role as well, but not the leading one. While 64% of respondents view Spanglish favorably in programming and advertisements, only 29% prioritize language as their primary connection point in advertising. Instead, half of the respondents (50%), value authentic cultural representation that extends beyond language, reflecting shared values and lived experiences.

Media also plays an active role in identity exploration. 85% of respondents use content to connect with their Hispanic/Latino identity, and more than one-third (35%) specifically seek out media to learn about their heritage.

> "It's not always about translation; it could be as simple as a single word. When you say 'mijo', just sprinkling that one word can create a powerful connection, while the rest of the ad still resonates across multiple cultural worlds. **It's about having the right cultural cue to spark a genuine response.**"
>
> **KARINA DOBARRO**
> EVP, Horizon Futures, Multicultural, Horizon Media

These results show that Hispanic Gen Z expects brands to reflect who they are in a deeper way. Authenticity comes from cultural cues, values, and identity-building touchpoints rather than relying solely on Spanish-language translation.

3. Content Tastes

Comedy and Music Drive Universal Engagement

Hispanic Gen Z audiences gravitate toward entertainment genres that create broad appeal, with comedy and music outperforming Latino-specific programming (telenovelas, Spanish-language variety shows, heritage-focused documentaries). Emotional connection matters more than cultural specificity alone.

Comedy ranks highest, with 77% of respondents reporting high viewer satisfaction, followed closely by music at 70%. Both genres transcend cultural boundaries and resonate strongly across this audience. Reality shows (63%) and authentic, unfiltered programming (63%) also perform well, showing a clear preference for relatability and raw storytelling.

Traditional Latino content continues to hold value. Dramas/novelas reach 67% enjoyment levels, while classic Latino-themed movies achieve 58%. These results show that heritage-based programming remains relevant, but it is emotional engagement that drives the strongest connections.

77%
enjoy comedy content

35%
enjoy music-related content

2.1 Hours
average viewing session

The data further indicates that content consumption patterns remain balanced. A majority (54%) engage with both on-demand and scheduled content equally, and the average viewing session lasts 2.1 hours. This demonstrates that structured programming remains part of the mix despite assumptions about younger audiences abandoning traditional viewing experiences.

4. Advertising Engagement

Authenticity Detection Drives Brand Success

Hispanic Gen Z audiences are highly skilled at detecting inauthentic messaging, making genuine cultural representation a necessity rather than an option.

87% of survey respondents notice when advertising lacks cultural relevance or feels inauthentic, and nearly one-third (32%) identify inauthenticity immediately. This high level of sensitivity means that cultural acknowledgment is expected: 59% say it is important for brands to recognize Hispanic heritage. However, execution matters most, making cultural authenticity a business priority rather than a nice-to-have diversity initiative. For Hispanic Gen Z, preferences divide into three nearly equal groups:

87%
detect authentic advertising

42%
make purchase after engaging with authentic ads

/ 33% of respondents want language-based representation

/ 33% prefer overall cultural representation that goes beyond language

/ 34% prioritize the relevance of the message itself over linguistic choices

Authenticity clearly translates directly into measurable results. More than half (51%) of respondents visit a brand's website after seeing an engaging advertisement, and 42% make a purchase thereafter. This data confirms that cultural authenticity directly supports conversion.

> "Gen Z doesn't want polished content, they don't want highly produced content. They want something raw, something messy, something almost like you created on your phone. Gen Z sees through the marketing BS, and **they don't want highly polished advertising content.**"
>
> **EVAN MOODY**
> Major QSR Representative

Lastly, these findings prove that authenticity is not just about brand perception. Rather, it is a driver of consumer action. Brands that fail to demonstrate genuine cultural understanding risk losing relevance, while those that succeed gain loyalty and measurable business outcomes.

5. Content Discovery

Social Influence and Trend Engagement

Hispanic Gen Z audiences are highly responsive to cultural trends and peer recommendations, creating strong opportunities for brands to align with what feels current and authentic.

A majority (85%) of respondents engage with trend-based content and advertising. Engagement is even higher among younger audiences, with 89% of 18-25-year-olds responding to trends. Women are the most responsive group overall, with 91% reporting engagement.

Social media serves as the primary discovery engine. Algorithms and peer recommendations shape what audiences see and trust, while authentic user-generated content and influencer partnerships carry more weight than traditional sponsorships. For brands, this underscores the importance of authenticity in social-first strategies.

85%
engage with trend-based advertising

91%
respond to trend-driven ads

These findings confirm that trend-driven marketing is especially powerful when paired with cultural fluency. Brands that can respond quickly to cultural conversations and align with relevant trends stand out with Hispanic Gen Z audiences.

Social Media
The #1 discovery engine for Hispanic Gen Z

6. Identity Formation Through Media

Content Actively Supports Cultural Connection

For Hispanic Gen Z, media is more than entertainment. It is a way to explore, affirm, and strengthen cultural identity.

85% of respondents say content helps them connect with their Hispanic/Latino identity. More than one-third (35%) actively use media to learn about their heritage. This shows that content plays an active role in cultural discovery and identity-building.

85%
say content connects them to their Hispanic Identity

2nd and 3rd Gen
media bridges cultural gaps where family connections fade

For second- and third-generation Hispanic Americans, media often bridges gaps where family connections to heritage may be less direct. Streaming, social, and on-demand platforms provide cultural touchpoints that sustain identity and belonging.

> "Content isn't just passive. It's how audiences are navigating their cultural identity now, especially younger audiences. As you get to second, third generations, that anchor point of an immigrant parent or grandparent is further away. **Content now steps in as a way to connect with your identity."**
>
> **MARIO CARRASCO**
> Co-Founder & Principal, ThinkNow Research

These insights reinforce the importance of authentic cultural representation in media. For Hispanic Gen Z, content is not only a reflection of who they are today but also a resource for understanding where they come from.

Strategic Implications & Opportunities

The research findings provide a roadmap for brands looking to connect with Hispanic Gen Z audiences in ways that are both authentic and measurable. This audience brings sophistication to every interaction, rewarding cultural fluency and penalizing anything that feels performative. The implications for advertisers, media planners, and content creators are clear.

5-8 pm
peak engagement hours

77%
value free access and variety in content

The Cultural Authenticity Advantage

Hispanic Gen Z consumers evaluate brands with sharp precision. With 87% detecting inauthentic advertising and 59% expecting cultural acknowledgment, authenticity is no longer optional. It is a competitive advantage.

This generation values their heritage deeply (91% consider it important), but they are equally open to global perspectives (95% express interest in foreign cultures). This polycultural mindset allows brands to celebrate Hispanic identity while situating it within broader cultural conversations.

Key takeaways for Brands

/ Go beyond translation: Only 29% see language as the primary connector, while 67% prioritize authentic representation. Campaigns must reflect shared values, lived experiences, and cultural nuance, not just Spanish-language adaptation.

/ Use cultural cues with intention: As Karina Dobarro of Horizon Media notes: "Our approach of polyculturalism differentiates heritage, which is carried on from ancestors and fixed, from culture, which is dynamic and constantly evolving. Cultural identity is a combination of both, and we view audiences through these two filters. This perspective aligns with the LatiNation findings that Gen Z balances heritage and cultural identity, using media both as a bridge to their roots and as a way to express an evolving culture.

/ Connect with cultural trends in real time: With 85% of respondents engaging with trend-driven advertising (rising to 89% among younger Gen Z), brands can combine authenticity with contemporary relevance. Social media is where this fluency matters most.

Content Strategy: Entertainment Creates Connection

The study confirms that comedy (77%) and music (70%) create stronger connections than narrowly defined cultural programming. Brands that align with these universal genres, while integrating authentic cultural details, can reach Hispanic audiences without sacrificing mainstream relevance.

Key takeaways for brands:

/ Favor authentic over polished: As Evan Moody explains, Gen Z prefers raw, social-first content over highly produced campaigns.

/ Create bicultural storytelling: 35% of respondents actively use media to learn about their heritage. Content that bridges past and present creates powerful emotional resonance.

/ Lead with emotional narratives: Reality shows (63% enjoyment) and authentic, unfiltered programming (63%) demonstrate the power of relatability and real stories.

Platform Strategy: Meeting Audiences Where They Are

Device use and viewing habits reveal clear requirements for advertisers. Younger Hispanics (18-25) lean mobile-first, with 34% naming phones as their primary device. Older Gen Z (26-34) prefer Smart TVs, with 51% citing them as their main screen. Campaigns must adapt seamlessly across these environments.

Key takeaways for brands:

/ Design adaptive creative formats: Campaigns need to perform in vertical mobile formats and horizontal TV formats without losing cultural authenticity.

/ Target peak engagement windows: With content engagement peaking from 5-8 p.m. (61% engagement), advertisers should prioritize spend during these hours.

/ Balance reach with consistency: While 77% of respondents value free access and content variety, consistent cultural messaging across platforms is what drives trust and recognition.

LatiNation's Strategic Position

LatiNation is uniquely aligned with these insights. Our award-winning programming is created by the very communities we serve, ensuring authenticity from conception to execution. By focusing on content that blends cultural relevance with the genres Gen Z values most, LatiNation bridges heritage and modern culture. With 91% of Hispanic Gen Z affirming pride in their heritage and 95% curious about global culture, LatiNation offers advertisers a proven platform for building meaningful connections that drive measurable results.

Advertiser Partnership Framework

The research provides a clear framework for brand partnerships that align with audience expectations while producing measurable business results. With 50% of engaged viewers visiting brand websites and 42% making purchases, the conversion potential supports premium positioning for authentic cultural connections.

Key takeaways for brands:

/ Co-create content instead of sponsoring: Audiences respond best when brands integrate seamlessly into culturally relevant storytelling.

/ Measure creative against performance: With conversion data available, advertisers can hold authentic campaigns accountable to business outcomes while also proving long-term value in brand trust.

Together, these strategies highlight how cultural authenticity, entertainment alignment, and adaptive platform use converge to create measurable impact. For advertisers, the opportunity is clear: campaigns that integrate these insights not only build trust but also drive conversion with one of the most influential consumer segments in the U.S.

Conclusion & Call to Action

Hispanic Gen Z is ready to engage with brands that respect cultural complexity. This audience eva-luates every message with sophistication, detects inauthenticity with high accuracy, and rewards ge-nuine cultural connection with measurable business results. This is not a future consideration or a diversity initiative. Instead, it is a current market opportunity with proven ROI.

Cultural authenticity drives action. 67% of respondents prioritize authentic representation, and 42% make purchases after engaging with culturally authentic advertising. The case for genuine cultural connection is both strategic and financial.

Identity connection transcends language. While 91% of respondents consider heritage important, only 29% prioritize Spanish-language content. Authentic connection comes from reflecting shared values, experiences, and cultural touchpoints rather than relying solely on translation.

Gen Z is redefining engagement. With 85% using content to strengthen cultural identity and more than one-third seeking it to learn about heritage, this audience is reshaping media as a tool for self-definition and cultural exploration. ■

About LatiNation

Authenticity drives impact at LatiNation—an award-winning, independent media powerhouse built by Latinos, for everyone. Unapologetically bicultural and bilingual, we amplify culture across every screen—linear TV, streaming, social, digital, and FAST/AVOD/CTV. LatiNation's dynamic product lineup includes the independent cable network LATV, LatiNation FAST, the LatiNation+ App, and our in-house production teams. We connect brands to the pulse of the new mainstream, reaching 81% of U.S. Hispanic households across the top 43 DMAs. In our casa, culture isn't just content—it's the fabric of a generation. Consider this your passport to LatiNation.

Let's Talk

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